

ROLE PERFORMANCE OF NILGIRIS TRIBAL WOMEN IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY OPERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in tribal communities is substantial and crucial. They constitute about half the total population but in tribal society women are more important than the social groups, because they work harder and the family economy and management depends on them. This study was aimed to investigate the role performance of tribal women of the Nilgiris district in Animal Husbandry operations. A sample of 180 tribal women was taken as respondents for the study. The results suggest that the tribal women actively performed their roles in collecting fodder for animals (4.48) and milking (4.48), compost making (4.17) and feeding the animals (4.14). Tribal women had performed well in roles like feeding (2.05), collection of eggs (2.04) and preparation of feed (2.00) with respective to poultry keeping. It could be inferred that the role of tribal farm women in most of the animal husbandry related operations were mostly performed.

KEYWORDS: Tribal Women, Role Performance, Animal Husbandry Operations & Poultry

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INTRODUCTION

The term “indigenous” peoples or population is used in various senses. It should be mentioned that there is a fundamental epistemological and political sociological difference in the choice of the appendage “people” or population”. (Gueye, 2003). The social system sets values and norms of expected behaviour and role relationships to every individual. Ranking of individuals along different positions on the social ladder and expecting them to perform roles appropriate to their social position is a characteristic feature of the society. (Florin et.al., 2007) The behaviour of an individual should be studied in the light of particular cultural demands, which his or her society makes upon him. From the above discussion, it is obvious that all the societies expect different behaviour from men and women and the behaviour of either sex cannot be anticipated without the knowledge of their role expectations. (Borgohain, 2011). Since, the largest section of women in the world live in tribal areas and in the third world countries, the majority of them are engaged in agricultural production, processing and distribution of products, the issue of tribal women’s participation in development, the manner in which their position and roles are being affected by the process of change call for a far more critical analysis and understanding than they received in past development strategies. (Kalyani et.al., 2011). With this background, the present study was aimed to specifically concentrate on the role performance of tribal women in animal husbandry operations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu was purposively selected because it is one of the districts in Tamil

Nadu in which more percentage of tribal population has been reported. Kotagiri and Udthagamandalam blocks were purposively selected because these two blocks have relatively more percentage of the selected tribal communities viz., todas, irulas and kotas. Of these, four revenue villages from Kotagiri block and to revenue villages from Udthagamandalam block were further selected considering the maximum number of identified tribal habitations viz., todas, irulas and kotas. A sample of 60 tribal women from each tribal community has been selected. Random sampling was adopted in selection of the respondents. Thus totally 180 respondents were considered for the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings on distribution of tribal women according to their role performance in animal husbandry operations are given in Table 1 and 2. Index based mean scores have been worked out and the results are presented hereunder.

Role Performance of Tribal Women in Animal Husbandry Operations

Role Performance of Tribal Women in Dairying

The findings on distribution of tribal women according to their role performance in dairying are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Role Performance of Tribal Women in Dairying (n=180)

S. No.	Roles	Todas (n=60)		Irulas (n=60)		Kotas (n=60)		Total (n=180)	
		Total Scores	Mean Scores	Total Scores	Mean Scores	Total Scores	Mean Scores	Total Scores	Mean Scores
A	Dairying								
1	Purchase of animals	87	1.45	80	1.33	92	1.53	259	1.44
2	Cleaning the cattle shed	156	2.6	92	1.53	122	2.03	370	2.06
3	Cleaning the animals	155	2.58	155	2.58	95	1.58	405	2.25
4	Fetching water for animals	279	4.7	209	3.48	94	1.57	582	3.23
5	Collecting fodder for animals	272	4.53	265	4.42	269	4.48	806	4.48
6	Preparation of cattle feed	153	2.55	154	2.57	150	2.5	457	2.54
7	Feeding the animals	268	4.47	269	4.48	208	3.47	745	4.14
8	Milking	273	4.55	264	4.4	270	4.5	807	4.48
9	Taking care of sick animals	85	1.42	91	1.52	92	1.53	268	1.49
10	Grazing	87	1.45	82	1.37	85	1.42	254	1.41
11	Taking animal for bull service	86	1.43	81	1.35	86	1.43	253	1.41
12	Taking animal for veterinary service	87	1.45	87	1.45	88	1.47	262	1.46
13	Collecting cow dung	211	3.52	210	3.5	211	3.52	632	3.51
14	Compost making	272	4.53	271	4.52	207	3.45	750	4.17
15	Making curd, butter and ghee	155	2.58	264	4.4	267	4.45	686	3.81
16	Selling of milk and its produce	209	3.48	149	2.48	150	2.5	508	2.82
	Overall Mean Score	2.96		2.84		2.59		2.79	
F=13.096** ** Significant at 0.01 probability level									

From time immemorial, women have played pivotal roles in cattle rearing, starting from feeding to milking and disposal of milk. Their roles in preparation of milk products, cleaning of cattle shed, collection of cow dung for the manure pits, preparation of cow dung cakes and their storage are remarkable. To understand the ground reality, data were collected and results are presented in table.

The overall scores in dairying indicated that collecting fodder for animals (4.48) and milking (4.48) served equal mean scores followed by compost making (4.17) and feeding the animals (4.14).

Among the most performed roles, the tribal women from toda community was found to secure more mean scores. This has been confirmed by the significant 'F' value. The reason would be that the toda women are supposed to be pastoral people who rear cattle traditionally more compared to their counterparts.

The highest mean score of role performance of irula farm women was obtained for roles like compost making (4.52) followed by feeding the animals (4.38), collecting fodder for animals (4.32), Milking (4.30) and making curd, butter and ghee (4.30).

Further, a comparative analysis indicated that the kota women were able to get the lowest overall mean score (2.50).

It could be inferred that most of the tribal women were found to have performed almost all the roles related to dairying. This might be due to the fact that they could earn throughout the year for their livelihood by the way of getting additional income generated from the dairy enterprises.

Role Performance of Tribal Women in Poultry Keeping

The findings on distribution of tribal women according to their various role performances in poultry keeping are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Role Performance of Tribal Women in Poultry Keeping (n=180)

S. No.	Roles	Todas (n=60)		Irulas (n=60)		Kotas (n=60)		Total (n=180)	
		Total Scores	Mean Scores	Total Scores	Mean Scores	Total Scores	MEAN Scores	Total Scores	Mean Scores
B	Poultry keeping								
1	Purchasing birds	91	1.52	88	1.47	60	1.0	239	1.33
2	Preparation of feed	93	1.55	207	3.45	60	1.0	360	2.00
3	Feeding	96	1.6	213	3.55	60	1.0	369	2.05
4	Taking care of sick birds	72	1.2	83	1.38	60	1.0	215	1.19
5	Cleaning the cages	73	1.22	211	3.52	60	1.0	344	1.91
6	Rearing the layers	82	1.37	90	1.5	60	1.0	232	1.29
7	Collection of eggs	96	1.6	212	3.53	60	1.0	368	2.04
8	Selling birds/eggs	78	1.3	84	1.4	60	1.0	222	1.23
	Overall Mean Score	1.42		2.48		1.00		1.63	
F=17.047** ** Significant at 0.01 probability level									

The overall analysis indicated that tribal women had performed well in roles like feeding (2.05), collection of eggs (2.04), preparation of feed (2.00) and cleaning the cages (1.91).

Further, it could be observed that the irula women had secured the highest overall mean score (2.48) against the kota women who had secured the lowest overall mean score. The reason might be due to the strange belief held by kota women that poultry farming was against God's will and it was a taboo.

Significant differences between the three tribal communities were obtained and confirmed by the significant 'F' value.

The toda women actively performed roles like feeding (1.6), collection of eggs (1.6) and preparation of feed (1.55). For irula women, roles like feeding (3.55), collection of eggs (3.53) and cleaning the cages (3.52) were most performed. The reason for the active role performance of these two tribal communities in poultry keeping might be due to the fact that they knew the practice of poultry keeping from their childhood days and through experience. Commercial demand for chicks and eggs in that locally would be another important motivating factor to acquire the skill with more enthusiasm.

The performance of kota women was very less for all the roles like purchasing birds, preparation of feed, feeding, taking care of sick birds, cleaning the cages, rearing the layers, collection of eggs, selling birds/eggs. The reason might be due to the fact that they considered poultry keeping as disgrace to their families as quoted above.

In all the tribal villages of the Nilgiris district, poultry keeping is a common feature in which the tribal women meet their meat and egg requirements both for the family purpose and selling purpose. Marketing of poultry products is being carried out in local markets or may be sold at times of demand by their neighbours on occasions.

It could be inferred that the role of tribal farm women in most of the animal husbandry related operations were mostly performed. The possible reason for more participation would be due to the more possession of livestock. Farming and animal husbandry are the two sides of the same coin. The economy of the farming communities is based on animal husbandry too. Thus, in order to increase family income, tribal farmwomen might have taken keen interest in most of the animal husbandry related operations. The other reason for more participation might be that animal husbandry activities are the predominant activities of women in tribal areas from time immemorial.

CONCLUSIONS

The tribes lead a living more close to nature and depend on it for their survival. They should be made aware of the usefulness of the botanical varieties in meeting the diverse needs of nature. Also, they should be educated suitably about the importance of maintaining diversity and the impact of loss of biodiversity. Further, the threatened species should be enlisted and tribes' help is sought in collecting such rare species. Women's involvement in the collection and preservation of these kinds of species is well acknowledged. They should know the value of every species; proper valuing of species is the need of the hour. (Awais, 2009). The development departments should be fully involved in creating necessary awareness and information dissemination about agro biodiversity conservation among the tribes; especially the tribal women.

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